

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

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R 211000Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0362

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMAMESSY KABUL 0903

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PK

SUBJECT: BHUTTO LINKS AFGHANISTAN WITH OPPOSITION

REF: LAHORE 0318

1. CONTINUING HIS TOUR OF SARGODHA DIVISION, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO ADDRESSED PUBLIC MEETING IN JHANG MARCH 20, AND ACCORDING TO PRESS EMPHASIZED PITCH THAT OPPOSITION UDF WAS "DANCING TO THE TUNE OF KABUL." WITH STANDARD SUBCONTINENT RHETORIC HE DECLARED THAT NEITHER AFGHANISTAN, INDIA, NOR THEIR "AGENTS" COULD HARM "SOLIDARITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY" OF PAKISTAN.

2. SPECIFICALLY, BHUTTO CHARGED THAT JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI, THREE MUSLIM LEAGUE FACTIONS AND SMALLER UDF PARTIES WERE USING PRECISELY SAME TACTICS AS WAS AFGHAN GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH HIS REGIME. BOTH AFGHANISTAN AND UDF HAD "MALIGNED" HIS GOVERNMENT BY STARTING "PROPAGANDA" THAT BAN OF NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY AND ARREST OF ITS LEADERS MEANT END OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN. BOTH GOA AND UDF, HE SAID, HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONDITIONED HOLDING OF TALKS WITH HIM UPON RELEASE OF NAP

LEADERS AND REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS ON "ANTI-NATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF CONGRESS-INSPIRED NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY."

3. PRIME MINISTER APPEALED TO OPPOSITION TO CONSIDER NATIONAL INTERESTS SUPREME, UNDERSTAND GRAVITY OF PRESENT SITUATION, AND LIFT THEIR BOYCOTT OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. HE ASSERTED IT WAS "NOT FAIR" FOR OPPOSITION TO BOYCOTT NA OVER NAP ISSUE, AND PROTESTED THAT NA WAS DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTION IN COUNTRY WHICH BOASTED "COMPLETE DEMOCRACY...AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND THE PRESS."

4. PRESUMABLY IN REACTION TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN RECENT WEEKS, BHUTTO ALSO DECLARED HIS GOVERNMENT HAD "NO INTENTION" OF INTRODUCING ONE-PARTY SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO GOP-CONTROLLED PAKISTAN TIMES, HE REMARKED THAT HE COULD ALWAYS CHANGE "PATTERN" AS SHEIKH MUJIB HAD DONE IN BANGLADESH. MUJIB, HE OBSERVED, WAS SITTING IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WITH "VAST MAJORITY," WHICH WAS SOMETHING PPP ALSO ENJOYED IN PAKISTAN.

5. COMMENT: PRIME MINISTER'S ATTACK ON UDF WITH TARBRUSH OF AFGHANISTAN IS SEEN BY SOME ANTI-PPP OBSERVERS IN LAHORE AS ANOTHER STEP IN PROCESS OF ISOLATING AND DESTROYING JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI, FOLLOWING ABOLITION OF NAP. WE ARE TOLD THAT LAHORE POLICE, UNDER ORDERS FROM GOP, HAVE ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK UDF PARLIAMENTARY MEETING SCHEDULED IN CITY MARCH 21, BUT SITUATION WAS "SAVED" WHEN UDF LAWYERS OBTAINED STAY ORDER FROM LAHORE HIGH COURT.

6. BHUTTO'S REFERENCE TO "CONGRESS-INSPIRED" ACTIVITIES OF NAP IS TRADITIONAL SHORTHAND IN PAKISTAN SINCE NAP IN NWFP IS SUCCESSOR TO PRE-PARTITION ALL-INDIA CONGRESS PARTY. LINKAGE OF INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN IS ALSO OLD LINE, BUT FOR ONCE PM APPARENTLY DID NOT MENTION SOVIETS IN SAME BREATH. HE ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE AVOIDED REPEATING OFFER TO AFGHAN GOVERNMENT TO HOLD DIALOGUE MADE PREVIOUS DAY IN SARGODHA.

7. MANY OBSERVERS SIGNIFICANTLY POINT OUT THAT BHUTTO CONTINUES TO AVOID PUBLIC MENTION OF ASGHAR KHAN'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL, WHOSE MNA'S AND MPA'S WILL BE ATTENDING LAHORE UDF MEETING BY PERSONAL INVITATION (TI IS NOT MEMBER OF UDF).
SPENGLER

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